

Pedestrian Advisory Engineering Subcommittee Minutes

March 16, 2023

Members present: Leisa Meeuwen-Ristuben, Harmony Anderson, Andrew Frenz, Peter Vader, Andrea Riehl, Matt Steinrueck, Kadence Novak

Staff Present: Andrew Degerstrom

Guests Present: Luke Hanson (Public Works), Fontaine Burruss (Public Works), Peter Bennett (Public Works), Tyler McLeete (Stantec), Aaron Warford (Hennepin County)

Additional Feedback in writing by Raina Urton presented to Andrea Riehl and Leisa Meeuwen-Ristuben prior to meeting

Called to order by Andrea Riehl Co-Chair at 4:33 PM

I. Johnson Street NE & I-35W Intersection Reconstruction

A resolution was not requested for this project.

Presenter: Fontaine Burruss and Luke Hanson, Minneapolis Public Works

This portion of the meeting provided updates on the first round of engagement and presented two options for a 20% concept design for the Johnson Street and 35W intersection. While a roundabout option was shown, pedestrian safety concerns have prompted project staff to favor a signalized intersection with a reduced footprint. Much of the pavement reduction will come from the removal of slip lanes currently in place in the intersection.

Andrew voiced his support for the signalized intersection and for connections to the 18th Street trail. He also asked about strategies to slow the speed of cars entering the intersection from the 35W exit ramp. Matt (and Raina through written feedback) raised similar concerns about vehicle speeds from this part of the intersection, especially during low traffic volume hours. Fontaine and Luke indicated that at this stage speed mitigation strategies include changes to signal timing, removing slip lanes, and narrowing lanes. Finally, Andrew reiterated a recommendation to formalize a well used desire path from surrounding neighborhoods to pedestrian infrastructure.

Peter shared Raina's feedback inquiring about maintaining two northbound lanes and a preference for one lane in this direction. Fontaine stated that traffic studies showed that there are backups onto the 35W ramp and that queueing at 18th Street would be an issue with one lane.

PAC members raised questions about the pedestrian infrastructure in the signalized intersection concept. Peter asked about the width of the crossing and if it would be widened. Fontaine indicated the crossing width is current at standard minimum 8-10 feet but that it could possibly be widened. Andrew asked about the lack of pedestrian infrastructure at both southern quadrants. Luke indicated that there is a steep grade on the southeast side that prohibits such construction within the scope of this project. Fontaine stated they are still trying to make connection on the southwest side since there have been proposals to develop the currently vacant parcel in that quadrant.

On the engagement front, Leisa asked about the plans for the second round of engagement. The Public Works team indicated that three neighborhood associations have requested presentations: Beltrami, Windom Park, and Northeast Park. Leisa pressed for Marcy-Holmes to also be included since there are a lot of residents in that neighborhood who shop at the Quarry and often use bikes/transit to travel to and from the area.

II. Hennepin-Dunwoody Bikeway

No resolution was asked for.

Presenter: Peter Bennett and Luke Hanson, Minneapolis Public Works

This segment provided an initial concept for the Hennepin-Dunwoody bikeway improvements (estimated between 15 and 20 percent). Improvements for the bikeway require extensive coordination with five other projects that are slated for the same general area as the scope for this project. The final design will make the current Cedar Lake Trail detour onto Hennepin and Dunwoody a permanent path for cyclists. A 30% design is anticipated for the spring. The following list represents some of the major points of the presented design.

- A full reconstruction of the 17th Street intersection (the broad term used for the convergence of multiple roads including Lyndale Avenue and Dunwoody Boulevard)
- Reductions in crossing distances (39 feet to 14 feet at some intersections)
- Two vehicle traffic lanes retained to accommodate future bus lane
- Bike traffic will not need to switch sides at 17th.

Most of the PAC comments on this project centered on clarifying some details and requesting additional improvements to pedestrian infrastructure. Matt asked about vehicle access on Harmon Place, and Luke confirmed that one of the access points will be closed in order to keep the bike lane in place. Andrea inquired about the Lyndale and Dunwoody crossing; this particular area is still being looked at. Peter encouraged the implementation of raised crossing wherever possible.

Andrew pointed out that there are three blocks where the grade differs from the rest of the proposed bikeway. He then asked about the cost savings between this grade difference and maintaining the same grade throughout the project. Luke stated that the current plan has significant cost savings. He pointed out that maintaining the same grade all the way would involve reconstruction and movement of utility lines.

III. Franklin Ave Reconstruction (Lyndale to Chicago)

No resolution was asked for.

Presenter: Peter Bennett, Minneapolis Public Works and Aaron Warford, Bolton and Menk

The final portion of the meeting summarized the initial engagement data and explained the division of segments for Franklin Avenue for concepts. Several concepts and their variations were also discussed over the course of the presentation. Engagement up to this point points to a very strong desire for improvements to pedestrian, bike, and transit improvements in the corridor. The current timeline is to have a preferred alternative selected in the spring and a 30% design presented to the PAC later this year.

Preliminary concepts/renderings for Franklin Avenue reconstruction were presented or at least discussed for the following segments:

- Lyndale Avenue to 1st Street (Segment 1)
- 1st Street to Clinton Avenue (Segment 2)

- Clinton Avenue to Portland Avenue (Segment 3)
- Portland Avenue to Chicago Avenue (Segment 4)

There were no renderings prepared for segment three due to complications arising from the bridge over 35W. These complications have posed significant challenges in creating initial designs for alternatives that accommodate all the needs and modes on Franklin as a whole. For the remaining segments, at least three concepts were presented. Segments 1 and 4 had the same concept as both segments have similar total right of way dimensions. Segment 2 has the narrowest right of way and has an additional concept to accommodate landscaping that is not available in the other three design concepts. Each segment has options for a center lane median; center turn lane (4 to 3 configuration); and two lanes undivided. Segment 2 also has an option for a dedicated bike lane on the road.

The PAC feedback shared after the presentation showed strong support for the center median concepts. In particular, Andrew stated that a median can mitigate reckless driving maneuvers. Matt also mentioned speed concerns and a lack of stops on Franklin between Lyndale and Blaisdell Avenues. Several PAC members expressed support for limiting left hand turns at offset intersections and pedestrian treatments similar to those used for Lyndale Ave.

Many questions raised by the PAC involved spacing in this corridor. In her feedback, Raina asked why the concepts for Segment 2 did not match Segments 1 and 4. Aaron indicated that Segment 2 has lower total and usable right of way compared to the other two segments. Andrew asked about differences in sidewalk lengths between Concepts 1 and 3 for Segment 4. The sidewalk width between the two concepts was noted to be negligible. Andrea pointed out that burying utilities for Segments 2 and 3 could open up additional space for pedestrians/bicycle traffic.

Meeting adjourned by Andrea at 6:08 PM